Private Sector. The District-wise distribution of these agencies is given in the Statement *(See* below).

(c) to (e) The National Co-operative Development Corporation (NCDC) has framed a Scheme for Farmers' Service Co-operatives. Under the scheme, NCDC provides margin money assistance to primary level cooperative societies for undertaking retail distribution of fertilizers, seeds, pesticides, consumer goods etc. The assistance has to be released to the Societies as Share Capital. The State Co-operative Department administers the scheme. The Scheme has yet to make headway in Bihar State.

Statement

District-wise Agencies for Selling Chemicals & Fertilizers in Bihar

s. No	Name of District	Coop-erative	Private	Total
1.	Patna	98	1240	1338
2.	Nalanda	62	508	570
3.	Bhojpur	18	236	254
4.	Buxar	29	221	250
5.	Rohtas	45	634	679
6.	Bhabhua	26	304	330
7.	Gaya	67	589	656
8.	Jehanabad	25	90	115
9.	Nawada	52	483	535
10	Aurangabad	41	226	267
11	Saran	47	469	516
12	Siwan	27	196	223
13	Gopalganj	49	115	164
14	Muzaffarpur	51	1160	1211
15	Vaishali	46	264	310
16	Sitamarhi	27	301	328
17	Sheohar	11	74	85
18	East Champaran	47	139	186
19	West Champaran	49	287	336
20	Darbhanga	51	208	259
21	Madhubani	22	264	286
22	Samastipur	77	574	651
23	Begusarai	36	371	407
24.	Bhagalpur	25	414	439
25.	Banka	20	283	303
26.	Munger	18	164	182
27.	Jamui	8	172	180
28.	Lakhisarai	35	213	248
29.	Sheikhpura	20	87	107
30.	Saharsa	12	183	195
31.	Supaul	9	187	196
32.	Madhepura	18	260	278
33.	Khagaria	8	129	137
34.	Purnea	41	184	225
35.	Araria	22	158	180
36.	Kishanganj	13	72	85
37.	Katihar	36	234	270
38.	Dumka	16	185	201
39.	Deoghar	7	141	148
40.	Godda	5	101	106
41.	Shahebganj	7	83	90
42.	Pakur	6	45	51
43.	Hazaribagh	27	111	138
44.	Koderma	11	62	73
45.	Chatra	11	36	47
46.	Giridih	17	108	125
47.	Dhanbad	7	15	22
48.	Bokaro	2	14	16
49.	Ranchi	56	351	407
50.	Gumla	36	155	191
51.	Lohardagga	7	55	62
52.	E. Singhbhum	30	68	98
53.	W. Singhbhum	57	110	167
54.	Palamau	11	106	117
55.	Garhwa	27	82	109
	TOTAL	1628	1352	115149

Domestic soda ash industry

1096. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH "SURYA": Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that domestic soda ash industry is under pressure due to cheap imports from China;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to intervene with a view to protect the domestic producers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) to (d) Domestic manufacturers of Soda Ash are of the view that China is dumping Soda Ash into the Country. A separate procedure has been prescribed for dealing with such cases and evidence regarding dumping has to be adduced. The Soda Ash industry has been advised to file their application before the prescribed authority.

Retail Prices for Decontrolled Fertilizers

1097. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to lift its control on fixing -maximum retail prices for decontrolled fertilizers; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) and (b) Fiscal sustainability and operational flexibility of the Special Concession Scheme on decontrolled fertilizers has to be ensured in the interest of continued availability of these fertilizers. However, a proposal for not indicating their maximum retail price is being examined by the government.

Modernisation of fertilizer companeis in Tamil Nadu

1098. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of fertilizer companies situated in Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether Government have any plan to modernise these companies;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICAL AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATAEL): (a) There are 5 major fertilizer plants in Tamil Nadu.

(b) to (d) Modernisation of fertilizer plants are undertaken by the promotors as and when required. Madras Fertilizers Limited has recently comissioned the expansion and rehabilitation of their existing plant.

Status of Assam Gas Cracker Project

1099. SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state the present and latest status of Assam Gas Cracker Project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): Assam Industrial Development Corporation (AIDC) proposed for setting, up a Gas Cracker to utilise gas available from oil fields in the State of Assam. A Letter of Intent (LOI) was issued to AIDC on 25.1.1991 for setting up gas cracker and other downstream units. The Government of Assam identified Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) as co-promoter of the project and a company Reliance Assam Petrochemicals Ltd. (RAPL) was incorporated. The LOI was subsequently transferred to RAPL.

Considering the potential contribution a mega complex can make towards socio-economic development of the region and certain inherent disadvantages of putting up the gas cracker project in Assam as compared to other regions in the country the Union Cabinet in 1994 and subsequently in 1977 approved following incentives-fconcessions:

(i) Provision of Rs. 377 crores as one time capital subsidy.